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The Naz Prayer Ministry



Under His Canopy

Boundaries have meaning. They come in handy when you want to fix limits.

Life is filled with rules. Basically they are intended to restrict us; the implied purpose, our protection. Parents make them, clubs and social groups adopt them, and government writes them and writes them and writes them *ad nauseum*, although with government, the purpose more often than not is probably to preserve power.

Of course some rules can seem a bit strange. In one central Ohio town, for example, an ordinance (#223 specifically) written in October of 1919, states that no one can install a slot machine in an outhouse. I don't even want to know what problem someone was trying to correct with that one.

The Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 are clearly rules, in this case provided by God to allow His people (with whom He had established a covenant relationship) to reflect to the people around them that they were the people of a Holy God who was actively engaged with the lives of His people.

The details provided in the first few books of the Bible are quite meticulous. They involved such things as how every manner of food was to be prepared or avoided, the way people were to dress, how ownership was to be established and safeguarded, and every other aspect of life as a community. Keeping all these rules demanded vigilance every day, indeed, every hour.

In contrast, we live in a society today that resists and often resents rules. We don't want anything to stand in the way of doing what feels good or what is convenient. Boundaries are often defined in our culture as tedious, disturbing, certainly unwelcome. So when we read the words of Psalm 119:97, we tend to blink in disbelief:

Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.

Love the law? Many, if not most, people, including many Christians, think of this part of Exodus and the Books of the Law, as dry and boring.

But in order to understand the psalmist, we need a change of perspective, particularly about what God wants for His people. His directives were designed to protect them from behavior that was physically and morally unhealthy and thus to help them experience order and peace both personally and socially. His directives served as evidence how much He loved them, and wanted them to share His *shalom*, peace that comes from wholeness.

In the end, perhaps the only real way to love the rules is to love the Giver of the rules. To know Him is encounter His grace, and to embrace His directives is to let His grace embrace you.

Take Your Next Step

The God of grace is indeed engaged in your life. His Spirit speaks of His desires about the way you are to conduct your life and the choices you make. If you are attentive, you will hear His promptings. Some are nudges to act. Others are alerts to pause or perhaps retreat. His urgings deep within your spirit always serve to sustain, protect and enhance your relationship with Him.

Even when His prodding may seem disruptive, restrictive, or even uncomfortable, react not from your discomfort, but from the assurance that you are covered by His grace.

Affirm at every juncture of life your submission to His authority and the joy of living under the canopy of His grace, including the directives that affirm His grace.